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PRINCIPLES OF FORMULATING THE INFORMATION POLICY OF THE EUROPEAN UNION AS A UNIFIED GOVERNANCE SYSTEM

The relevance of researching the principles underlying the European Union's information policy is driven by the transformation of the global communication paradigm, which is significantly altering not only information flows themselves but also the mechanisms for their regulation at the level of supranational unions. In the face of contemporary challenges associated with the growing influence of disinformation, cyber threats, and digital transformations, the EU's information policy has become a key instrument for ensuring both the security of the information space and the harmonization of regulatory practices among member states. A deep understanding of the foundations of such policy formation allows researchers to identify its fundamental patterns and strategic imperatives, presenting scientific interest for further developments in this field. The article aims to identify and systematize the foundational principles that govern the process of shaping the European Union's information policy as an integrated governance system.

The methodological framework of the study is grounded in an interdisciplinary approach that incorporates elements of political analysis, legal research, and digital sociology tools. The analytical method is based on a constructivist approach, which enables the examination of the EU's information policy as a dynamic socio-constructive phenomenon formed through the interaction of various political, institutional, and technological factors. The use of critical discourse analysis further facilitates the identification of latent ideological frameworks influencing the formation of a unified information policy.

The research has identified and systematized the core principles of the EU's information policy, which include transparency, accountability, subsidiarity, integration, and the safeguarding of human rights. Each of these principles is considered a conceptual component that ensures the functioning of the EU's information space as a unified governance system. The study also reveals that the effectiveness of the information policy largely depends on member states' capacity to adapt their national approaches to the overarching European regulatory framework.

The conclusions indicate that the European Union's information policy is a complex, multi-level process requiring the active engagement of all participants in the European political system. Adherence to established principles not only fosters unity and stability within the information

environment but also strengthens trust in EU institutions, which is particularly crucial in the context of current geopolitical threats. Further research could focus on analyzing prospects for improving the EU's information policy in light of emerging challenges facing the European community.

Keywords: *European Union, information policy, governance system, disinformation, cybersecurity, digital rights, integration, transparency, subsidiarity, human rights.*

ПРИНЦИПИ ФОРМУВАННЯ ІНФОРМАЦІЙНОЇ ПОЛІТИКИ ЄВРОПЕЙСЬКОГО СОЮЗУ ЯК ЄДИНОЇ УПРАВЛІНСЬКОЇ СИСТЕМИ

Актуальність дослідження принципів формування інформаційної політики Європейського Союзу обумовлена трансформацією глобальної комунікаційної парадигми, яка суттєво змінює не лише самі інформаційні потоки, але й механізми їхнього регулювання на рівні наднаціональних об'єднань. У контексті сучасних викликів, пов'язаних із посиленням впливу дезінформації, кіберзагроз та цифрових трансформацій, інформаційна політика ЄС стає ключовим інструментом забезпечення як безпеки інформаційного простору, так і гармонізації регуляторних практик між державами-членами. Глибинне осмислення основ формування такої політики дозволяє виявити її фундаментальні закономірності та стратегічні імперативи, що становить науковий інтерес для подальших розробок у цій галузі. Метою статті є виявлення та систематизація базових принципів, що регулюють процес формування інформаційної політики Європейського Союзу як інтегрованої управлінської системи. 3

Методологічний апарат дослідження базується на міждисциплінарному підході, що включає елементи політичного аналізу, правового дослідження, а також інструментарій цифрової соціології. В основу аналітичного методу покладено конструктивістський підхід, який дозволяє розглянути інформаційну політику ЄС як динамічний соціально-конструктивний феномен, що формується в результаті взаємодії різних політичних, інституційних та технологічних факторів. Використання критичного дискурсу-аналізу забезпечує можливість ідентифікації прихованих ідеологічних настанов, що впливають на формування єдиної інформаційної політики.

У результаті проведеного дослідження були виявлені та систематизовані основні принципи інформаційної політики ЄС, до яких належать прозорість, підзвітність, субсидіарність, інтегрованість та забезпечення прав людини. Кожен з цих принципів розглядається як концептуальний компонент, що забезпечує функціонування інформаційного простору ЄС як єдиної керованої системи. Дослідження також показало, що ефективність інформаційної політики значною мірою залежить від здатності держав-членів адаптувати свої національні підходи до загальноєвропейської нормативної бази.

Висновки свідчать, що інформаційна політика Європейського Союзу є складним, багаторівневим процесом, який передбачає активну участь усіх суб'єктів європейської політичної системи. Дотримання встановлених принципів не лише сприяє єдності та стабільності інформаційного середовища, але й сприяє зміцненню довіри до інституцій ЄС, що особливо важливо в умовах сучасних геополітичних загроз. Подальші дослідження можуть зосередитися на аналізі перспектив вдосконалення інформаційної політики ЄС у світлі нових викликів, що постають перед європейською спільнотою.

Ключові слова: *Європейський Союз, інформаційна політика, управлінська система, дезінформація, кібербезпека, цифрові права, інтеграція, прозорість, субсидіарність, права людини.*

Problem Statement. The dominant trend in societal development in the 21st century is the shift towards a new type of social organization within the state,

characterized by its informational and networked nature. In such a state, information becomes accessible and open to the entire society. A key factor of post-industrial development is the information revolution, which brings about qualitative changes driven by information and communication technologies [7, p. 27]. As a result of this revolution, the significance of the information sphere in society and state life has escalated: it has shifted from a supporting role to one that is leading and decisive.

Simultaneously, the relationship between power and society is undergoing structural transformation. Information power closely intertwines with other forms of power and assumes a dominant position. Therefore, the informational dimension plays a particularly critical role in state governance. Information policy can either foster new social orders or distort the democratic direction of the political process. It is also worth noting that integration exerts a profound impact on modern informational processes. The integration process, which began with the development of common industrial policies, has culminated in the formation of a global, supranational, and multicultural community.

For Ukraine, information policy is an essential tool for societal functioning, especially as it takes on strategic significance in the context of present-day realities, such as Russian aggression. The nature of modern warfare demonstrates that the struggle for information and information dominance is one of the primary and decisive factors for victory. The events of the Russia-Ukraine war have intensified and accelerated the development of state information policy under crisis conditions.

Moreover, Ukraine's European integration should foster deep-seated understanding that European integration means an improved quality of life, reforms, societal pressure on state institutions, fair social policy, and new, high-quality standards for business and public officials. European integration also signifies Ukraine's alignment with the EU in terms of laws, regulations, and customs [10, p. 917]. Thus, the principles underpinning the European Union's information policy should serve as a foundational basis for further shaping Ukraine's state information policy.

Analysis of Recent Research and Publications. In analyzing the latest academic inquiries into the challenges of the European Union's information policy and its relevance to the Ukrainian context, particular attention should be paid to the foundational work of V. Bondar. This study emphasizes the importance of countering online disinformation within the EU's institutional frameworks. Specifically, Bondar identifies a correlation between the EU's regulatory initiatives and their practical

implementation, proposing that information policy be viewed as a multi-level mechanism that requires alignment of national regulatory bodies with the EU's integrated guidelines. The researcher points out the necessity for Ukraine to adapt its information policy to European standards to enhance its effectiveness amid escalating geopolitical tensions.

The issue of information security, examined by A. Hlushko, D. Kolinchuk, and O. Yarmak, highlights the strategic aspects of countering cyber threats and methods of destructive information influence. The authors justify the need for a comprehensive approach to protecting critical infrastructure, grounded in EU experience, and underscore the importance of implementing national initiatives in the context of global cyber stability. This work concludes that adapting Ukraine's regulatory models to current cybersecurity standards, established by entities like the European Union Agency for Cybersecurity and CERT-EU, is essential to ensuring resilience in Ukraine's cyber sphere.

A critical analysis by N. Likarchuk on the conceptual and practical aspects of information distortion as a tool of influence warrants special attention. Likarchuk considers information distortion to be an effective manipulation technology used to distort managerial decisions and public opinion. She argues that such disinformation practices have the potential to fundamentally undermine democratic institutions unless effective countermeasures are established. Institutional and regulatory awareness in this area is crucial for protecting society from destabilizing influences on both national and international scales.

Article Objectives. The objective of this article is to analyze the principles underpinning the development of the European Union's information policy as a unified governance system and to identify its primary directions and implementation mechanisms. The research focuses on delineating the key approaches that ensure coherence and effectiveness in communications within the EU framework.

Presentation of Main Content. To regulate its activities, the European Union and its institutions have had to consider the diverse and heterogeneous cultural, traditional, and political interests of its member states. The EU builds its policy on the principles of cohesion, integrity, and unity, while simultaneously preserving national distinctions. Creating a unified information space within the European community is impossible without a pan-European information policy based on mutual consent, alignment of interests, respect, and the formation of shared social and political goals, ideas, and values. It is important to note that the European Union

is not a state in the traditional sense; therefore, its information policy is of a supranational nature. At the same time, the EU's information policy must align with the interests of the Union as a whole, without infringing on the interests of individual member states. Achieving this balance is possible only through dialogue aimed at collective decision-making. This characteristic defines the bilateral nature of the EU's information policy.

Since 1987, the EU's telecommunications policy has become one of the core issues of general policy: the European Commission has established both external and internal objectives for its information policy, including the creation of a unified media space and protection of the EU's internal communication space from external influences [9]. In general, the EU's information policy can be described as an information and communication activity of EU institutions that supports the objectives of the European community, aligns with the national interests of member states and their citizens, and aims to create and sustain a unified European cultural and informational space.

As observed, the goals of the EU's informational space are complex and multifaceted. Therefore, in the process of forming this space, European structures have developed key principles for their information policy, categorizing them into three groups based on the interests and values of three significant entities: society as a whole and the individual citizen, individual national states, and the European Union as a single administrative system [4].

These groups of principles are defined by: socio-political values adopted and enshrined in pan-European legislation; EU interests based on international law standards; and the national interests of EU member states grounded in the legislation of individual countries [6, p. 61].

The first group of EU information policy principles is based on three fundamental socio-political values, which are enshrined in international law and in the legislation governing the establishment and functioning of the EU [8]. From the outset, the idea of a united Europe was positioned not as an economic union but as a means of ending the longstanding international "antipathy" within Europe. Consequently, the EU adheres to a model of community function supported by the majority of its citizens, which includes the recognition and protection of the inherent rights of individuals and citizens, as established in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and reaffirmed by the European Convention on Human Rights and

Fundamental Freedoms (1950) as well as the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights (2000) [5].

Freedom of expression is particularly noteworthy—it represents the natural right to access information and freely express one's views, as guaranteed by the European Convention on Human Rights and Article 11 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights [5]. This right ensures that all individuals have the freedom of self-expression, with the caveat that licensing for broadcasting, television, and cinema should not act as a constraint on this freedom. Additionally, certain restrictions on disseminating and accessing information are permissible under the law when they pertain to national security interests, territorial integrity, or public order.

The principle of openness in governance is articulated in the European Commission's White Paper on Governance (2001), which underscores the importance of making information on EU institutional processes and outcomes available to all citizens [4]. The EU has made substantial progress toward this goal, accrediting a large number of journalists to ensure that the media can provide real-time updates on decisions made, thus informing the entire European community.

Moreover, a comprehensive Internet project has been implemented: the official EU website, which provides citizens of member states with information about EU activities in all official languages of the European community. Another key principle is universal access to information, which guarantees that the EU provides access to information in citizens' native languages via appropriate channels, including modern technology. This information covers public interest issues, political events, and cultural and sporting activities.

The EU also puts significant effort into fostering media literacy among its citizens, promoting the development of skills in information search and providing mechanisms to enable rapid access to needed data—an especially vital consideration for minorities and people with disabilities.

The second group of EU information policy principles is founded on the collective European interests that require informational support. This group comprises several key principles.

The first of these is the principle of free movement of television programs within the single market. This principle ensures the openness of internal borders for the unrestricted flow of information and ideas across the EU. It is established in key EU documents that set the guidelines for broadcasting television programs throughout the Union (the “Television Without Frontiers” initiative) [11]. This

framework includes a minimal set of rules that member states must follow, and to enforce these rules, the European Commission requires regular compliance reports on the implementation of these directives.

The next principle is the principle of media pluralism. The EU outlines several conditions to uphold this principle effectively:

1. **Regulating Interactions Between Political and Economic Interests.** The EU emphasizes the need to manage the interactions between political and economic interests across all media structures. Media plays a critical role in disseminating economic and political information, and it is essential to prevent various groups from exploiting this information for their own interests (currently, this is regulated directly by member states).

2. **Addressing Media Concentration.** The EU aims to prevent a limited number of media moguls from dominating the media market, thus ensuring entry opportunities for new players in mass media. This regulation is grounded in European competition law, which promotes a free market for goods and services, as well as in the EU Commission's directive on market competition. However, there is an important caveat: pan-European regulation cannot fully oversee national markets in this regard, so member states are allowed to implement supplementary measures to protect media pluralism [11].

3. **Ensuring Diversity of Media Content.** Often, various media outlets and television channels disseminate the same information. In Europe, this phenomenon arises because many media companies do not produce their own media content but instead rely on material (photos, video footage) from different agencies. This is especially prevalent in smaller countries, where a reliance on information agencies and a reduction in original correspondents can create dependency risks.

The next principle is free competition in the information market, based on the EU's commitment to the free movement of goods and services. This principle entails an open information space that welcomes new entrants in media production and services throughout the European community, regardless of national borders. The EU generally recommends that member states remove legal restrictions that could hinder the free flow of information and media services within the unified telecommunications market [12].

Another key principle in this group is the principle of “cultural exception”. To protect its cultural heritage and promote local production, the EU seeks “cultural exception” status within the WTO. This principle allows EU countries to limit the

influx of foreign media products by reserving airtime for national programs, thereby safeguarding cultural integrity.

The next principle is the “prevalence” of European media products. Specifically, the “Television Without Frontiers Directive” mandates that media outlets reserve the majority of their broadcasting time (excluding news, advertising, teletext, teleshopping, sports, and entertainment programs) for European programming. Currently, European producers are unable to provide a sufficient volume of media content, leading the EU to initiate a specialized program offering financial support to producers of European television programs.

The third group of principles in the EU's information policy rests on the right of member states to implement independent domestic information policies that reflect their national interests. The first principle within this group is the principle of subsidiarity. This principle, formalized in the Maastricht Treaty, applies to national aspects of EU information policy, setting boundaries on EU authority over national matters.

Thus, national information policy, external information policy, and regulation of general and internal media market rules remain within the competence of member states, provided that they adhere to:

- general standards in information activities;
- uniform technical standards within the establishment of a unified European information space [2, p. 124].

The second principle in this group is the principle of organic interaction between pan-European and national media policies. Notably, national characteristics in each EU member state (particularly language barriers) significantly impact the European media market as a whole. Although integration trends encourage a unified European information space, information boundaries and barriers persist. The European Union is “obliged” to conduct a common information policy to support EU objectives while also “compelled” to ensure the informational autonomy of each member state's internal activities. Although achieving this balance is challenging, the principle is largely upheld.

Another key principle is the preservation of cultural diversity. Under pan-European norms to maintain cultural diversity, EU member states receive support for publications in minority languages. In general, the regulation of domestic information policies, in alignment with EU document requirements, remains under member state jurisdiction.

The audiovisual sector, in particular, is undergoing transformation: traditional audiovisual formats are converging, allowing all television programs and news to be accessed via mobile devices. Furthermore, the modern European information landscape is characterized by: nonlinear information services; the advancement of digital television; shifts in audience expectations regarding content and its accessibility [11].

Accordingly, the “Television Without Frontiers Directive” is undergoing revision within the scope of audiovisual legislation. Key changes include expanding the Directive’s coverage to all forms of audiovisual and media services, including nonlinear ones, and more precisely regulating advertising practices to reflect current trends in the advertising industry.

Despite the foundational principles of the European Union’s information policy, challenges persist in forming a cohesive European information space, as information policy is inherently dynamic. The main challenges include: the establishment of nationally-focused sources of information about EU operations; a partial lack of adequate pan-European sources of information and media outlets.

These issues contribute to a communication gap between the EU and its citizens. However, the European Union continues to address these challenges. Overall, the EU’s information policy evolves alongside European integration, adhering to international law, the legislation of member states, and balancing supranational characteristics with the interests of all stakeholders: the European Union, national states, and citizens.

Analyzing the application of EU information policy principles in Ukraine reveals that Ukrainian state institutions should comprehensively reform the country's information and communication sectors. This approach requires different methods of engaging the public and new mechanisms to incorporate these principles within governmental operations, as well as a fundamental shift in mindset [3, p. 217].

In practice, Ukraine is implementing measures to gradually harmonize its national legislation with international standards and EU information policy law, as outlined in the Association Agreement and the European Commission’s Opinion on Ukraine’s application for EU membership dated June 17, 2022.

Currently, within the framework of the joint program between the European Union and the Council of Europe titled “The European Union and the Council of Europe working together to strengthen human rights protection in Ukraine”, the technical assistance project “Component 1” is being implemented. Additionally, the

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European Union and the Council of Europe are jointly supporting a media freedom program in Ukraine, aimed at reinforcing the role of media, securing freedom and safety, and building public broadcasting as a foundational tool for consensus and unity within Ukrainian society. Although these initiatives sound promising, the realities in Ukraine paint a different picture.

Ukraine is in ongoing negotiations with the European Union, individual member states, the international community, and digital platforms to block television and other channels that disseminate Russian propaganda (or Kremlin propaganda) about the war in Ukraine. The country is also urging the implementation of restrictive measures (sanctions) against individuals and legal entities responsible for producing and spreading anti-human propaganda.

To counter Kremlin propaganda, it is essential to employ both a universal international legal media space and to work toward establishing a unified European media system.

Ukraine's information policy responded to Russian aggression by establishing a national 24-hour information marathon, "Unified News", as per the decision of Ukraine's National Security and Defense Council, formalized in Presidential Decree No. 152/2022 dated March 18, 2022, "On the Implementation of a Unified Information Policy Under Martial Law". This initiative was designed to ensure the public's unrestricted access to reliable information during the full-scale war, providing updates, announcements of humanitarian corridors, danger alerts, and other socially significant content via television channels, satellite, digital platforms, an online network, and a mobile app.

Initially, this marathon met society's informational needs in the early stages of Russia's invasion. However, today, "Unified News" has attracted considerable criticism and doubts regarding its relevance. It appears to serve primarily pro-government institutions, with the effect of "canonizing" information and maintaining control over a highly influential medium—television.

Conclusions. In its current format, the "Unified News" television marathon does not align with the principles of information policy applied within the EU. Some of these principles are absent altogether, making it premature to discuss a fully EU-aligned information policy in Ukraine. Moreover, the marathon's uniform style of information delivery deters viewers from engaging with television, leading to growing public distrust toward government institutions—a critical issue as Ukraine aims to join the European community.

It is clear that all the principles outlined by the European Union are essential primarily for the EU itself, as it seeks to regulate and harmonize media activity, especially in the context of digitalization and the dominance of major online platforms. For Ukraine, it is imperative to implement these principles as swiftly as possible into its media legislation, including regulations on public media, as well as into other laws and codes.

To establish productive cooperation, Ukraine should immediately initiate consultations and proactive dialogue with the EU to explore possible mechanisms or bilateral agreements for quality interaction. These efforts could cover the exchange of information on the implementation of EU information policy principles, strategies to combat disinformation, and means of engaging the public. Failure to undertake such measures could present a significant obstacle to future collaboration and hinder Ukraine's European integration trajectory.

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